

[Old Timers Dictionary]

Marie Carter

Anthony, New Mexico

940 words.

OLD TIMERS STORIES

Sarah Belle Adams (Mrs. R.C. Adams)

Mrs. Belle Adams, who lives on the family ranche northeast of Anthony, is a jolly little white-haired lady with a contagious laugh. When I ask her to narrate how she and her family factored in the early days of Anthony, she settled back in her blue tapestry arm-chair and began: "Before coming to Anthony we lived in Ohio. That's where I was born. In the town of Rome—Rome, Ohio," she explained. "The year was 1860, and the month was September—September 21st. Bob and I came to Anthony in a covered wagon in the year of 1903. There were only a few white folks here when we came and most of them were homesteaders like ourselves. We homesteaded right here on this ranche where we live today. It wasn't much of a ranche in the early days though. Bob and I worked hard and made it what it is. We homesteaded a 154 acres, and when we proved up our deed was signed by ex-president Taft."

"Were there very many white people living here when you came to Anthony?" I inquired.

"No indeed, my dear. Let me see, Mrs Story and Mrs Coleman were here. Mr. and Mrs. Royal Jackman—Mr. Jackman was the station agent. By-the-way, you must get Mr. Jackman to tell you something about the early days, Well, as I was saying, another old-timer was Mrs. Alvarez—Cecilia Richards Alvarez. She 2 was a fine woman; she moved to

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La Union. Dr. and Mrs. Lauson were here, too. There is another lady I used to know by the name of Harkey. Her daughter, Mrs. Gardner, lives in Berino. Mrs. Harkey taught school in the early days."

"Where did you get your water, did you have a well?" I asked.

"At first we dug a temporary well. That is, it wasn't very deep. The reason we didn't dig it deeper was because there was so much talk about highline canal. But gracious, me, we got sick and tired waiting for it, so Bob and I had two deep wells drilled, and we had plenty of water for irrigating. We put out some fruit trees and when they began to bear we had some of the best fruit in Anthony. Peaches, pears, plums, apples and several other kinds of fruit. We had grapes, too. Then the World War came along, and oil went sky high and we couldn't afford to use it for pumping any more; so most of our fruit trees died. Finally we built a lot of chicken houses and went into the poultry business.

"I suppose farming was a difficult problem in those days, I observed.

"Indeed it was. The ranche folks west of the Santa Fe tracks had more to contend with than folks east of the tracks. For the spring floods were a yearly occurrence, and the Rio Grande a menace to their crops. I suppose you've heard this before, but then, it won't do any harm for me to tell it again.

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It's about the rafts we made out of rough logs to carry us across the river. Some of the ranchers had skiffs, but most of them forded across. Finally, when we did get a bridge that would stay put, it was better than a Christmas tree. Once in awhile we'd have a community picnic. Then the ladies had a chance to show off their cooking, good or bad. We never went to a picnic, barbecue, or party without taking plenty of good things to eat," she said.

"Mrs. Adams," I quizzed, "how was Charley Miller related to you?"

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"Why didn't you know he was my son-in-law?" she exclaimed. "Charley married one of my daughters. He was a fine man, too. "Charley came here from Texas, long before the railroad, and when they hauled everything in wagons. He owned lots of land in the early days. Anthony didn't have much of a school house when we first came, either, but after awhile they got busy and built one east of town. You, know, the building the Masons occupy now, they bought it when the present school house was built."

Mr. Charley Miller, the son-in-law of Mrs. Belle Adams, was highly respected in the Anthony community, and is often mentioned by the rest of the old-timers. He ran the first Valley Mercantile store and the first flour mill. He was a friend to the poor homesteaders, whom he often carried on his books from five to seven years. Then, when they had proved up on their property 4 they would reimburse Mr. Miller with land. Hence he became one of the largest land holders in this district. Following his death Anthonians were surprised to learn that he had willed them the present cemetery site, east of town, at the foot of the mountains he loved.

Robert Collins Adams, the husband of Sarah Belle Adams, lovingly called "Uncle Bob," is another old-timer who has passed on, leaving a clean path for his worthy sons, fine daughters and grandchildren to proudly follow.

Mrs. Adams is the mother of Clark Adams, manager of the Dairy Farm, west of Anthony; Mrs. C.G. Allison of Berino, a former school teacher of Dona Ana County, and a graduate of the New Mexico College of agriculture and Mechanic Arts at Mesilla Park; Mrs. Charley Miller of El Paso, Texas, school teacher and also a graduate of the New Mexico A. & M. College; Robert E. Adams of Soring, New Mexico, 2nd Lieutenant with the Civil Engineers in France, during the World War.

Mrs. Adams is the grandmother of Robert Adams, son of Clark Adams of Anthony. Robert is a teacher in the Anthony Grade school and a graduate of the same college from which his two Aunts were graduated, the New Mexico A. & M. Robert's brother Charley and

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sister Mary Helen are also attending the A. & M. College. Peggy Jean, Clark's youngest daughter, whom grandma Adams calls her "darling," is making a pretty good start, with the A. & M. College her goal. For at the present time she is a pupil, in the 5 Anthony Grade School, where big brother Robert is a teacher.

Justice Calvin Adams, son of Robert E. Adams of Springer, New Mexico, is also a grandson of Mrs. Sarah Belle Adams. Fanny Adams, who before her marriage was Fanny Ploughman, is the wife of Clark Adams of Anthony, and the proud mother of Robert, Charley, Mary Helen and Peggy Jean Adams. Mrs. Sarah Belle Adams, wife of Robert Collins Adams, was born: September 21, 1860 in the town of Rome, Adams County, Ohio; came to Anthony in the year 1903; homesteaded on a ranche about a mile east of Anthony, where she still lives and is proud to tell the world that she does all of her own house work.